SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE FRIEND OF ALL

(Compilation of the memorable events in the life of Swami Vivekananda and his sayings)

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Preface to the First Edition

In the year 1988 when the country was celebrating Swami Vivekananda's 125th birth-anniversary, the Institute published a Bengali book, *Sabār Swāmījī*, as a token of its tribute to the Swami. The book, in Bengali, is a compilation of striking episodes in Swami Vivekananda's life, with some of his invaluable utterances. The book became at once popular and has been reprinted four times since it first appeared.

Now there is the demand that the book be translated into other languages. To begin with, it has been translated into English and is now being put out, entitled *Swami Vivekananda : The Friend of All*. We hope it will be equally popular as its Bengali counterpart has been.

8 March 1991 Swami Lokeswarananda

Publisher's Note to the Revised Edition

In this revised edition, we corrected some small mistakes which took place in the previous editions. We hope the book will continue to be as popular as before.

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Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902)

Swami Vivekananda was born Narendranath Datta, son of a well-known lawyer of Calcutta, Vishwanath Datta, and a very intelligent and pious lady, Bhuvaneshwari Devi, in the year 1863. Vishwanath often had scholarly discussions with his clients and friends on politics, religion and society. He would invite Narendranath to join in these discussions and even to express his views on the topics under discussion. Narendra, not in the least embarrassed, would say whatever he thought was right, advancing also arguments in support of his stand. Some of Vishwanath's friends resented Naren's presence among them, more so because he had the audacity to talk about matters concerning adults. Vishwanath, however, encouraged him. Naren would say: Point out where I'm wrong, but why should you object to my independent thinking?

Naren learnt the Epics and *Purāṇas* from his mother, who was a good storyteller. He also inherited her memory among other qualities. He, in fact, owed much to her as he used to say later. Naren was all-round. He could sing, was good at sports, had a ready wit, his range of knowledge was extensive, had a rational frame of mind and he loved to help people. He

was a natural leader. He was much sought after by people because of his various accomplishments.

Naren passed Entrance examination from the Metropolitan Institution and FA and BA examinations from the General Assembly's Institution (now, Scottish Church College). Philosophy was the first priority with him and Hastie, Principal of the College, was highly impressed by Naren's philosophical insight. It was from Hastie that he first heard of Sri Ramakrishna.

As a student of Philosophy, the question of God very much haunted his mind. Was there a God? If there was a God, what was He like? What were man's relations with Him? Did He create this world which was so full of anomalies? He discussed these questions with many, but no one could give him satisfactory answers. He looked to persons who could say that they had seen God, but found none. Meanwhile, Keshub Chandra Sen had become the head of the Brāhmo Movement. He was a great orator and many young people, attracted by his oratory, enrolled as members of the Brāhmo Samāj. Naren also did the same. For some time he was satisfied with what the Brāhmo Samāj taught him, but soon he began to feel it did not quite touch the core of the matter, so far as religion was concerned. A relation of his used to advise him to visit Ramakrishna at Dakshineshwar, who, he said, would be able to remove all his doubts about religion. He happened to meet Ramakrishna at the house of a neighbour, but there is nothing on record about the

impression that he created on Naren's mind. He, however, invited Naren to visit him at Dakshineshwar some day. As the days passed, Naren began to grow restless about the various riddles that religion presented to him. He particularly wanted to meet a person who could talk about God with the authority of personal experience. Finally, he went to Ramakrishna one day and asked him straightaway if he had seen God. He said he had, and if Naren so wished, he could even show God to him. This naturally took Naren by surprise. But he did not know what to make of it, for though his simplicity and love of God impressed Naren, his idiosyncrasies made him suspect if Ramakrishna was not a 'monomaniac'. He began to watch him from close quarters and after a long time he was left in no doubt that Ramakrishna was an extraordinary man. He was the only man he had so far met who had completely mastered himself. Then, he was also the best illustration of every religious truth he preached. Naren loved and admired Ramakrishna but he never surrendered his independence of judgement. Interestingly, Ramakrishna himself did not demand it of him, or of any other of his disciples. Nevertheless, Naren gradually came to accept Ramakrishna as his master.

Ramakrishna suffered from cancer and passed away in 1886. During his illness, a group of select young men had gathered round him and began to nurse him while receiving spiritual guidance from him. Naren was the leader of this group. Ramakrishna had wanted that they

take to monastic life and had symbolically given them *geruā* cloth. They accordingly founded a monastery at Baranagar and began to live together, depending upon what they got by begging. Sometimes they would also wander about like other monks. Naren also would sometimes go travelling. It was while he was thus travelling that he assumed the name of Swami Vivekananda.

Vivekananda travelled extensively through India, sometimes by train, sometimes on foot. He was shocked to see the conditions of rural India—people ignorant, superstitious, half-starved, and victims of caste-tyranny. If this shocked him, the callousness of the so-called educated upper classes shocked him still more. In the course of his travels he met many princes who invited him to stay with them as their guest. He met also city-based members of the intelligentsia—lawyers, teachers, journalists and government officials. He appealed to all to do something for the masses. No one seemed to pay any heed to him—except the Maharaja of Mysore, the Maharaja of Khetri and a few young men of Madras. Swami Vivekananda impressed on everybody the need to mobilize the masses. A few educated men and women could not solve the problems of the country; the mass power had to be harnessed to the task. He wanted the masses educated. The ruler of Mysore was among the first to make primary education free within his State. This, however, was not enough in Swamiji's view.

A peasant could not afford to send his children to school, for he needed their help in his field. He wanted education taken, to the peasant's doorstep, so that the peasant's children could work and learn at the same time. It was a kind of 'non-formal' education which perhaps he visualized. His letter to the Maharaja of Mysore on the subject show how much thought he had given to the subject and how original he was.

Other princes, or the intelligentsia as a whole, were impressed by Swamiji's personality, but were much too engrossed with their own affairs to pay any heed to his appeals. Some of the young men of Madras, Perumal specially, dedicated himself to the ideals Swamiji propounded and his contributions to the success of his mission were significant. Swamiji could guess the reason why the so-called leaders of society ignored him. Who was he? A mere wandering monk. There were hundreds of such monks all over the country. Why should they pay any special attention to him? By and large, they followed only Western thinkers and those Indians who followed the West and had had some recognition in the West by so doing. It was slave mentality, but that was what characterized the attitude of the educated Indians over most matters. It pained Swamiji to see Indians strutting about in Western clothes and imitating Western ways and manners, as if that made them really Western. Later he would call out to the nation and say, 'Feel proud that you are Indians even if

you're wearing a loin-cloth.' He was not opposed to learning from the West, for he knew the Western people had some great qualities and it was because of those qualities that they had become so rich and powerful. He wanted India to learn science and technology from the West and its power to organize and its practical sense, but, at the same time, retain its high moral and spiritual idealism. But the selfishness of the so-called educated people pained him more. They were happy if they could care for themselves and they gave a damn to what happened to other people. Swamiji wanted to draw their attention to the miserable condition of the masses—illiterate, always on the verge of starvation, superstition and victims of oppression by the upper castes and the rich landlords.

As Swamiji arrived in Madras, young people gathered round him drawn by his bright looks and inspiring talks. They begged him to go to the USA to attend the forthcoming Parliament of Religions in Chicago to represent Hinduism. They even started raising funds for the purpose. Swamiji was at first reluctant but later felt some good might come out of his visit to the West, for if he could make some impression there, his people back at home, who always judged a thing good or bad according as the Western critics thought of it, would then give him a respectful hearing. That is exactly what happened : Swamiji made a tremendous impression, first in USA and then also in

England. The press paid him the highest tributes as an exponent of India's age-old values; overnight he became a great national hero in India. Suddenly it was brought home to them that there must be something in Indian thought that Western intelligentsia feel compelled to admire. Slowly but inevitably, they began to revise their opinions about their own country and civilization. They began to suspect that perhaps they were not as backward as they once thought, and in areas like religion and philosophy, in art and literature, they were perhaps more advanced than the Western people. They had always felt sorry about themselves, but, now for the first time, they awoke to the richness of their heritage. This was the starting point of the Indian renaissance one hears about. A long succession of national leaders starting from Tilak have drawn inspiration from Swami Vivekananda. They 'discovered' India—her strong and weak points— through him. 'If you want to know India, study Vivekananda', was Tagore's advice to Romain Rolland. This holds true even today, indeed, no one has studied India's body and mind so thoroughly as Swamiji did.

He described India's neglect of the masses as a national sin. Next to this was the sin of neglecting the womanhood. Caste, in its present form, was yet another sin. India's ethnic and religious pluralism did not worry him, for India had always sought her unity in love and respect for different sects and communities. He saw

socialism coming and he welcomed it—for India as for the rest of the world. The Śūdras, i.e. the working people, were sure to come to power, and in order that the transition might be peaceful he asked the Brahmins, i.e. the intelligentsia, to pave the way to it. Lest any cultural decline occur following this shift he wanted to deluge the country with spiritual thought.

It was Swamiji's hope that India would create a new social order and a new civilization by combining her best spiritual traditions with the latest advancement in science and technology. She would be rich both materially and spiritually. He knew affluence was not enough, man had to be human, too. He wanted India to set an example in this.

Memorable Events in the Life of Swami Vivekananda

Bhuvaneshwari Devi, Narendranath's mother, was a noble lady. In his later life Swami Vivekananda used to say time and again : 'I am indebted to her for my intellectual development.' She taught Narendra in a unique way. The following event is illustrative :

Once Narendra was punished at school for no fault of his own. The geography teacher asked him a question which Narendra answered correctly. But the teacher thought he was wrong and punished him. But Narendra was undaunted even as a boy. He protested, 'I committed no error, sir; I am sure what I said is right.' This made the teacher furious and he caned Narendra mercilessly.

Narendra returned home, his eyes filled with tears and narrated everything to his mother. But Bhuvaneshwari consoled him saying, 'My son, why do you care if you are in the right? Follow the truth always, whatever happens.'

Narendranath found his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, to be an embodiment of the ideal his mother had instilled in him. Sri Ramakrishna used to say : 'Truth is to

be cultivated by all means. If a man holds to truth in this *Kaliyuga*, he will certainly realize God.' And Sri Ramakrishna himself practised what he preached.

This ideal of unwavering loyalty to truth which Swamiji saw in his mother and later in his spiritual master found expression in all his actions. It was therefore only but natural that the world would later hear him proclaim : 'Everything can be sacrificed for truth, but truth cannot be sacrificed for anything.'

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His mother once gave him this advice : 'Be pure, live a clean life, defend your dignity and be respectful to others. Be gentle and modest, but do not hesitate to be firm when the situation requires it.'

This wise counsel helped to mould Narendra's character. From the time he was a child, he knew how to maintain his self-respect. He never hesitated to show due respect to others; at the same time he was not prepared to stomach unprovoked insult from anyone. Narendra was amazed one day when one of his father's friends treated him with contempt for no reason at all. He was unfamiliar with such an attitude, for his parents had never considered him to be too young to be treated respectfully. 'How strange', he thought, 'even my father never belittles me this way.' Then he stood erect like a bruised king cobra and firmly said to the gentleman : 'Look, there are many like

you who think age and intelligence are synonymous, but that is not so.' The gentleman readily admitted his error.

In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* we come across Naciketā, another fearless child who had great self-confidence. Swami Vivekananda always admired Naciketā who had said : 'I may be the best or at least better than many; but I'm never the worst.'

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Narendra's father, Vishwanath Datta, was well known for his charity. Mahendranath Datta, his second son, writes of him : 'The impulse to help the poor was almost like a disease with him.' In his locality he was popularly called 'Vishwanath the benevolent'. He could hardly remain silent when he found someone in distress. He would bear ungrudgingly the educational expenses for the children of his distant relatives and would go out of his way to alleviate the poverty of his neighbours. What is striking is he did not discriminate in matters of charity. He would give financial aid even to drug addicts. Narendranath noticed this and once drew his father's attention to this gross misuse of money. At this Vishwanath said, 'Life is full of suffering, my son! When you grow up you will realize all this yourself and will have pity even on addicts or those who take to drink and other vices to get temporary relief from the endless miseries of life.'

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Narendranath found a complete expression of this sympathy in the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna who transformed his natural compassion into love and reverence for everyone and everything. Sri Ramakrishna taught him that pity is not enough. Man is a living God. Do we ever think of showing pity to God? No, on the contrary, we feel blessed to be able to serve and worship Him. Therefore 'pity' is not the right expression. The right kind of attitude should be to serve *jīva* as Śiva, to serve humanity as the manifestation of Divinity. None is to be hated, for even the sinner is essentially God. The same Nārāyaṇa (God) is present in the guise of the thief or the person lacking in culture, as well as in the righteous and refined.

Swami Vivekananda thus learnt from his Master to treat every man, even the fallen one, with respect. He used to say : 'God the wicked', 'God the sinner'. He often said : 'If in this hell of a world one can bring a little joy and peace even for a day into the heart of a single person, that much alone is true; this I have learnt after suffering all my life.'

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Narendra was a master storyteller whose words were as magnetic as his personality. When he spoke everyone listened with rapt attention forgetting their

work. One day while in school, Narendra was talking animatedly to his friends during a class recess. Meanwhile, the teacher had entered the classroom and had begun to teach his subject. But the students were too absorbed in Narendra's story to pay any attention to the lesson. After some time had passed, the teacher heard the whispering and understood what was going on! Visibly annoyed, he now asked each student what he had been lecturing on. None could answer. But Narendra was remarkably talented: his mind could work simultaneously on two planes. While he had engaged one part of his mind in talking, he had kept the other half on the lesson. So when the teacher asked him that question, he answered correctly. Quite nonplussed, the teacher inquired who had been talking so long. Everybody pointed at Narendranath, but the teacher refused to believe them. He then asked all students except Narendra to stand up on the bench. Narendra also joined his friends and stood up. The teacher asked him to sit down. But Narendra replied : 'No sir, I must also stand up because it was I who was talking to them.'

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It was time to deposit fees for the BA examination. All the classmates of Narendra except Haridas Chattopadhyaya had deposited the money. Haridas was

very poor. He could somehow manage to gather the examination fees but the college authorities would not accept them unless he paid his college dues for the whole year. Thus Haridas's hope of sitting for the examination was dashed to the ground.

Narendranath eventually came to know about the plight of Haridas and was shocked. Suddenly it dawned on him that there was a provision for exemption from college dues in special cases, and that Rajkumarbabu, the old college clerk, could save Haridas in this crisis. There was at least a ray of hope. So Narendra assured his friend that he would do everything in his capacity to help him.

A few days later when the students were depositing their dues and examination fees, Narendra went to Rajkumarbabu and pleaded, 'Sir, Haridas is incapable of paying his college dues. Will you kindly exempt him? If you send him up for the examination he will pass with credit; otherwise he will be undone.'

Rajkumarbabu had an irritable temper. He grimaced and carped at Narendra, 'Your presumptuous recommendation is uncalled for. You better oil your own machine. I won't send him up unless he pays his dues.' Thus rebuffed Narendra became very worried about his friend. He felt hopeless because he knew that he himself could never collect that amount of money, and it had to be paid immediately. Thus he was at a loss, not knowing what to do. At this point a plan occurred to him.

He knew that Rajkumarbabu was an opium-addict and that every evening he visited a particular den adjacent to Hedua to indulge in this habit. Narendra did not return home after college hours that day but eagerly waited for sundown. As darkness enveloped the city, Narendranath moved close to the den and kept watching those going towards it. After some time Narendranath noticed that old Rajkumar was stealthily inching towards the opium shops. Realizing that the fish was now in his net, Narendranath hurriedly appeared before Rajkumarbabu, who was of course embarrassed. Narendranath realized that this was the opportune moment. He once again pleaded for Haridas and threatened that he would let the cat out of the bag if Rajkumarbabu failed to comply with his request.

Rajkumarbabu smelt danger, so he said to Narendra in a low voice, 'Why do you get angry with me, dear? What you want will be done. Can I ever ignore your request?' Narendranath understood his job was over and his mission was successful, so he returned home as the old man slipped into the narcotic den.

Before daybreak the following day, Narendranath went to Haridas's house and said to him, 'Come, be of good cheer, our work is done. You will not have to pay the college dues.' Then Narendra described vividly what had happened the previous evening and both of them burst into laughter.

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The following incident took place during Swamiji's wandering days when he was staying at Varanasi. One day when he was returning from visiting the Durgā temple, a troop of monkeys chased after him. To save himself Swamiji at first started running, but the monkeys ran still faster and grew increasingly aggressive. At this time an old monk who happened to witness the scene called out to him : 'Stop running. Face the brutes!' Swamiji heard his call and turned to 'face the brutes'. Then the monkeys stopped harassing him.

Swamiji drew a great lesson from this apparently simple incident. He learnt that one should not run away when faced with danger or difficulty; instead, one must face it boldly. In his later life, Swamiji referred to this incident while addressing a gathering in New York. He said : 'That is a lesson for all life—face the terrible, face it boldly. Like the monkeys, the hardships of life fall back when we cease to flee before them. If we are ever to gain freedom, it must be by conquering nature, never by running away. Cowards never win victories. We have to face fear and troubles and ignorance if we expect them to flee before us.'

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Once someone told Swamiji that the monk should have no particular attachment to his country. Instead, he should view all countries as his own. At this, Swamiji

replied : 'He who fails to love and support his mother how can he provide sustenance for another's mother?' What Swamiji meant was that even the *sannyāsin*s should love their motherland. How can he who cannot love his own country, embrace the world? Patriotism first, then universalism.

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Swamiji was having a long trek in the Himalayas when he found an old man extremely exhausted standing hopelessly at the foot of an upward slope. The man said to Swamiji in utter frustration, 'Oh, Sir, how to cross it; I cannot walk any more; my chest will break.'

Swamiji listened to the old man patiently and then said, 'Look down at your feet. The road that is under your feet is the road that you have passed over and is the same road that you see before you; it will soon be under your feet.' These words emboldened the old man to resume his onward trek.

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It was August 1888. Swamiji was on his way to Vrindavan from Agra. As he reached the outskirts of the town he saw a man contentedly smoking tobacco by the wayside. Swamiji was tired as he had walked a long way. He felt an urge to smoke and take some rest. So he approached the man and asked him if he could smoke his hookah. The very proposal made the man

shudder. He said to Swamiji, 'I am sorry, sir! I cannot allow you to smoke this pipe which I have used. You are a monk while I am a *Bhāṅgi*, an ignoble sweeper!'

Swamiji said nothing and resumed his walk. But having gone some distance, it struck him in a flash : What! Am I not a *sannyāsin* who has renounced everything including the idea of caste, family prestige and so forth? What a shame that I would not smoke his pipe only because he is a *Bhāṅgi*! The thought made him so restless that he at once came back to the man and made him prepare a *chilim* of tobacco, much against his wish. Then Swamiji joyfully smoked the pipe.

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On April 13, 1890, Swamiji, who was then staying at Varanasi, received the sad news that Balaram Bose, his brother disciple, had passed away. He was so shocked that he could not restrain his tears. Pramadadas Mitra, a renowned scholar of Varanasi, noticed this and said : 'Swamiji, you are a monk. You should not lament like this.'

Pramadababu's remark hurt Swamiji. He said, 'What do you mean, Pramadababu? It is true I am a monk. But should a monk necessarily be heartless?' Then he continued : 'You see, a genuine monk is much more tender-hearted than ordinary souls. After all, we are human beings. And, on top of it all, Balarambabu was my brother disciple. I don't like the kind of asceticism which makes one unfeeling and pitiless!'

Swamiji often used to tell his disciples that he who does not try to do good to others can hardly be called a *sannyāsin*. He repeatedly said that a *sannyāsin* is born to live for others, to comfort the afflicted—be she a mother who has lost her son or a sad widow. He is there to redress the worldly suffering of mortals as well as to take care of their spiritual need by arousing their latent spirituality.

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Swamiji held Pavhari Baba in high esteem. He knew the yogi personally. While in Ghazipur, Swamiji heard that once a thief entered into Baba's hut to rob him of his few belongings. As the thief was about to leave the place with the stolen goods, the yogi woke up. This frightened the thief and he threw down everything and started running away. Pavhari Baba promptly picked up the things and followed the thief. Finally, after a hot chase, he caught the thief and begged him to accept the goods. 'All these are yours, Nārāyaṇa', Baba told the thief, who stared at him in disbelief.

Years later during his wanderings in the Himalayas Swamiji one day noticed a *sādhu* of luminous appearance. After some conversation Swamiji became convinced that the sadhu was of a high order. But he was astonished when the latter said, 'I was that thief who attempted to steal from the saint!' The monk continued his confession : 'When Pavhari Baba handed me everything that belonged to him with a smile and

addressed me as "Nārāyaṇa", I realized what a crime I had committed and how mean I was! From that moment I gave up my evil pursuit of material wealth and engaged myself in search for spiritual wealth.' His story deeply impressed Swamiji who later used to say : Sinners are potential saints.

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An interesting incident took place when Swami Vivekananda was living the life of a wandering monk. It was most probably in the second week of November 1890 that Swamiji came to Meerut where by chance he met some of his brother monks who were also on pilgrimage. All of them were naturally very pleased to see one another after such a long time. They lived together and transformed the place into a second Baranagore Math.

It is well known that Swamiji was a great lover of books. In Meerut, he spent much time in reading. At his bidding Swami Akhandananda would go to a local library every day and bring a big volume of Sir John Lubbock's works and return it the following day.

The librarian thought that Swamiji was not reading the books, that he was only trying to impress everyone. One day the librarian openly expressed his doubt to Swami Akhandananda when the latter came to collect another volume of Lubbock. Akhandananda reported this to Swamiji. On hearing this Swamiji himself one day called on the librarian and said to him humbly, 'Sir, I

have gone through the books attentively, and if you have any doubt about it, you may ask any question you like from the books.' The librarian then asked a number of questions and Swamiji correctly answered them. The librarian was astonished. Never before had he seen such a person as Swamiji!

The Raja of Khetri was equally amazed by Swamiji's mode of reading. Swamiji would simply turn over the pages of a book quite hurriedly from beginning to the end, and that was all—the book had been read! When the Raja asked how that was possible, Swamiji explained that when a child first learns to read he fixes his attention on a particular letter of the alphabet, pronounces it twice or thrice, and then moves on to the next letter to utter the whole word. As he masters the art of reading a little, he keeps his attention on each word. After much practice he can read a sentence at a glance. If one goes on increasing his power of concentration, one can read a page in the twinkling of an eye. Swamiji said that was exactly what he did and added that three things were necessary—continence, practice, and concentration. Anybody could achieve this power if he scrupulously adhered to these three things.

Once he astonished Haripada Mitra, the Sub-divisional Forest Officer of Belgaum, by reciting from memory a large portion of Dickens's *Pickwick Papers*. Haripadababu was more wonder-struck when Swamiji

told him that he had read the book only twice. He told Mitra that concentration and continence sharpen the mind.

Swamiji was once unwell and staying at Belur Math. One day his disciple Sharatchandra Chakravarti came to see him in his room and found there a new set of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica.* Sharatchandra looked at those large glossy volumes and remarked, 'It is indeed very difficult to read so many volumes in one lifetime.' Swamiji did not agree. 'What do you mean?' he said, 'Ask me anything you like from the ten volumes I have just finished.'

The disciple asked Swamiji a number of questions from each volume and, to his wonder, Swamiji passed the test. Not only that, in many cases, Swamiji quoted at length the very words of the books. At last, to instil self-confidence in his disciple, Swamiji said, 'Look my child, if you can observe strict continence, you can master everything you wish and can easily acquire this kind of memory.' Swamiji said the same thing to the German philosopher Paul Deussen who was astonished by his prodigious memory.

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It was 1891. Swamiji was staying at Mount Abu as a guest of a Muslim lawyer. One day Jagmohanlal, the Private Secretary of the Raja of Khetri, came to the lawyer's bungalow and was quite surprised to see

Swamiji, a Hindu *sannyāsin*, there. Unable to conceal his wonder, Jagmohanlal said to Swamiji : 'Well, Swamiji, you are a Hindu monk. How is it that you are living with a Muslim?'

Swamiji could never stand the slightest hint of caste and religious discrimination or parochialism of any sort, so he replied in a stern voice : 'Sir, what do you mean? I am a *sannyāsin*. I am above all your social conventions. I can dine even with sweepers, the so-called outcastes. I am not afraid of God, for He sanctions it; I am not afraid of scriptures, for they allow it; but I am afraid of you people and your society. You know nothing of God and the scriptures. I see Brahman everywhere, manifested even in the meanest creature. For me, there is nothing high or low. Śiva, Śiva!' Every word of Swamiji rained fire while Munshi Jagmohanlal stood mesmerized before his towering personality.

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One evening the Raja of Khetri wished to hear songs sung by a professional dancing-girl as was the custom in those days. At that time Swamiji was staying as Ajit Singhji's guest at the Khetri palace. The Raja invited Swamiji to join him but Swamiji refused and sent a message that as a *sannyāsin* it was against his principles to attend such party.

The singer was deeply grieved when she heard this and started to sing, as it were in reply, a song of

Surdās, the Vaiṣṇava saint. Through the quiet evening air, the girl's sweet, plaintive voice reached the sensitive ears of Swamiji. The message of the song was : 'O Lord, look not upon my evil qualities. Thy name, O Lord, is Same-sighted. One piece of iron is in the image in the temple, and another in the butcher's hand, but when they touch the philosopher's stone, both alike turn into gold. So, Lord, look not upon my evil qualities.'

The whole song expressing the truth that God dwells in everyone and everything touched Swamiji deeply. He soon reproached himself, muttering 'What sort of a *sannyāsin* are you that you still distinguish a woman from yourself?' The song taught him a great lesson. Swamiji realized he could not reject anyone, for in all lies the same Self. He then rushed to the music room and listened to the song. It is said that Swamiji addressed the woman as 'Mother' and begged her pardon for his discourteous behaviour.

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A *sannyāsin*, in the strictest sense of the term, is always a free soul. Like a river, he is always on the move. Sometimes he spends the night at a burning ghat, sometimes he sleeps in the palace of a king, sometimes he rests at a railway station, but he is always happy. Such a *sannyāsin* was Swamiji whom we now find living at a railway station in Rajasthan. People kept coming to him all day long. They had many questions,

mostly religious, and Swamiji was tireless in answering them. Three days and three nights passed in this manner. Swamiji was so engrossed in talking about spiritual matters that he did not even stop to eat. The people who flocked to him also did not think of asking him if he had any food to eat!

On the third night of his stay there, when the visitors had all left, a poor man came forward and said to him lovingly, 'Swamiji, I have noticed that for three days you have been talking and talking. You have not taken even a drop of water! This has pained me very much.'

Swamiji felt that God had appeared before him in the form of this poor man. He looked at him and said, 'Will you please give me something to eat?' The man was a cobbler by profession, so he said with some hesitation, 'Swamiji, my heart yearns to give you some bread, but how can I? I have touched it. If you permit, I will bring you some coarse flour and dal and you can prepare them as you please!'

Swamiji said, 'No, my child; give me the bread you have baked. I shall be happy to eat it.' The poor man was frightened at first. He feared the king might punish him if he came to know that he, a low caste person, had prepared food for a *sannyāsin*. But the eagerness to serve a monk overpowered his fear. He hurriedly went back home and soon returned with bread freshly baked for Swamiji. The kindness and unselfish love of this penurious man brought tears to Swamiji's eyes. How

many persons like this live in the huts of our country unnoticed, he thought. They are materially poor and of so-called humble origin, yet they are so noble and large-hearted.

In the meantime, some gentlemen found that Swamiji was eating food offered by a shoemaker and were very annoyed. They came to Swamiji and told him that it was improper for him to accept food from a man of low birth. Swamiji patiently heard them and then said, 'You people made me talk without respite for the past three days, but you did not even care to inquire if I had taken any food and rest. You claim you are gentlemen and boast of your high caste; what is more shameful, you condemn this man for being of a low caste. Can you overlook the humanity he has just shown and despise him without feeling ashamed?'

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Spiritually advanced souls sometimes suffer from what is called divine discontent. Swamiji was no exception. Once when leading the life of wandering monk, he despaired of attaining the highest goal—God realization—for which he had renounced the world. 'This life is of no use to me', he said to himself and made up his mind to meditate without food and thus let his body drop like a dry leaf.

With this aim in mind, he entered a trackless forest and walked the whole day without any food. After

sundown he felt too tired to go further and lay down under a tree. After a little while he saw a tiger stealthily advancing towards him. He lay still and thought : 'Here is an opportunity for me to serve at least one hungry beast by being its prey. I do not think I will ever be able to do any other good to the world.' Then he calmly waited for the tiger to pounce on him. The tiger came very close to Swamiji, but for some unknown reason, turned around and disappeared into the darkness of the forest. Swamiji could not believe his eyes! He kept thinking that the tiger might return. He spent the whole night under the tree waiting, but the tiger did not come back.

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The Maharaja of Mysore, Chamarajendra Wadiyar, like some other rulers of the princely states, felt attracted to the luminous personality and exceptional talents of Swamiji, then a wandering monk, and in a short time intimacy developed between the two. One day the Maharaja asked, 'Swamiji, what do you think of my courtiers?' The courtiers were all present there, but Swamiji was in the habit of calling a spade a spade. So he said without any hesitation : 'Courtiers are courtiers everywhere !'

The Maharaja understood what Swamiji meant. He was intelligent enough to realize that what Swamiji said was true. Yet, as if to pretend that he did not wholly agree with Swamiji and thereby defend the honour of his

courtiers, he said in mild protest, 'No, no, Swamiji, my Dewan at least is not such. He is intelligent and trustworthy.' 'But, your Highness,' replied Swamiji, 'a Dewan is one who robs the Maharaja and pays the political agent of the British Government.'

The Maharaja, finding that Swamiji was going too far, changed the course of discussion and after some time took Swamiji to his inner chamber and said, 'My dear Swami, too much frankness is not always safe. If you continue to speak as you did in the presence of my courtiers, I am afraid you will be poisoned by someone.' Swamiji burst out, 'What ! do you think an honest *sannyāsī* is afraid of speaking the truth, even though it costs him his very life? Suppose, your Highness, your son should ask me tomorrow, "Swamiji, what do you think of my father?" Am I to attribute to you all sorts of virtues which I am quite aware that you do not possess? Shall I speak falsely? Never!'

Despite his outspokenness, Swamiji never criticized anybody behind his back. If he found something wrong with somebody he would criticize him only to his face. In his absence, he would praise his virtues, brushing aside his negative aspects.

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Swami Turiyananda (Hari Maharaj) tells of an incident that took place at the Abu Road station when he, with Swami Brahmananda, came to see Swamiji before he left for Bombay. Swamiji said to him on that

occasion, 'Haribhai, I am still unable to understand anything of your so-called religion.' He could not finish all that he wanted to say as he was overwhelmed with an intense emotion that shook his frame and brought a look of profound sadness to his face. But he soon composed himself, and placing his hand on his chest, added, 'But my heart has expanded beyond measure and I have learnt to feel the sufferings of others! Believe me, I literally writhe with pain when anybody suffers!'

Swamiji was again overwhelmed and tears streamed down his cheeks. Swami Turiyananda was stunned. 'Didn't Buddha feel the same way and utter these very words of love?' he thought. He could clearly perceive that the endless misery of millions of people was creating a tempest in Swamiji.

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Swamiji had a deep sense of self-respect and also wanted all Indians to be equally conscious of their self-respect. The following incident prior to his journey to the West will illustrate this point.

Swamiji and Jagmohanlal were sitting inside a railway coach at the Abu Road station, waiting for the train to leave for Bombay. A Bengali admirer of Swamiji who came to see them off was also in the compartment. In the mean time, a European ticket collector came and harshly ordered the gentleman out of the train. The gentleman was also a railway employee. He tried to convince the ticket collector that he had done nothing

unlawful. But the ticket collector would not listen to him. As a result there was a heated argument when Swamiji himself intervened. But the European, taking him to be an ordinary monk, said in an insolent manner, *Tum kāhe bāt karte ho?*—'Why do you interfere?'

The Hindi word *tum* is used to address intimate friends or inferiors while the word *āp* denotes either equals or superiors. The disparaging *tum* angered Swamiji. He said, 'What do you mean by *tum*? Can you not behave properly? You are attending to first-and second-class passengers, and you do not know manners! Why do you not say *āp*?' Realizing his mistake, the ticket collector said, 'I am sorry. I don't know the language well. I only wanted this man... .' Swamiji interrupted him : 'Just now you said you did not know Hindi well. Now I see that you do not even know your own language well. This "man" of whom you speak is a "gentleman".' Swamiji then told the European that he would report his disrespectful actions to the authorities. Quite frightened, the ticket collector hurriedly left the compartment.

No sooner had the ticket collector left than Swamiji turned to Jagmohanlal and said : You see, what we need in our dealings with the Europeans is self-respect. We should always remain as conscious of our rank and station as others do. Unfortunately we fail to do so and this failure prompts others to disparage us. We must defend our self-esteem by all means, otherwise we will

be slighted and insulted. Mind you, cowardice is the breeding ground of all corruption, of all evils. The Hindus are no less civilized than anybody else on earth, but they always underestimate themselves. That is why every Tom, Dick and Harry dare to humiliate us, and we stomach the insult silently.

Thus Swamiji taught Indians how to love and respect their country. He was fully confident that the world needed Indian spiritual treasures much more than it needed Western materialism. And this conviction never allowed him to be dazzled by the sparkling affluence of Western civilization, nor did it let him suffer for a moment from any inferiority complex. It was again out of that unshakable conviction that he proclaimed the glory of Indian civilization and culture. There can be no doubt that his courage and the strength of his conviction inspired thousands of people in the West to love India and its civilization. Insight into how Swamiji was viewed at the historic Parliament of Religions can be had from the words of Dr Annie Besant.

Dr Besant wrote : 'A striking figure, clad in yellow and orange, shining like the sun of India in the midst of the heavy atmosphere of Chicago, a lion head, piercing eyes, mobile lips, movements swift and abrupt—such was my first impression of Swami Vivekananda, as I met him in one of the rooms set apart for the use of the delegates to the Parliament of Religions. Monk, they called him, not unwarrantably, warrior monk was he,

and the first impression was of the warrior rather than of the monk, for he was off the platform, and his figure was instinct with pride of country, pride of race—the representative of the oldest of living religions. ... India was not to be shamed before the hurrying arrogant West by this her envoy and her son. He brought her message, he spoke in her name, and the herald remembered the dignity of the royal land whence he came. Purposeful, virile, strong, he stood out, a man among men, able to hold his own.'

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Swamiji's first lecture at the Parliament of Religions made him so famous that the most distinguished people of Chicago invited him to their homes. Everybody wanted to be his host.

After the first day's session of the Parliament, Swamiji was taken to the mansion of a millionaire and given a royal reception. The host did everything possible to make Swamiji feel comfortable, but Swamiji neither hankered after name and fame nor did he want physical comfort. So even amidst this pomp and grandeur and the spontaneous applause from the American people, Swamiji felt uncomfortable. He could not forget how much his countrymen were suffering. His heart continued to bleed for India and he could not sleep on the luxurious bed. He lay on the floor and wept like a child the whole night. He prayed : 'O Mother, who cares for fame when my country is bogged down in

deep poverty! We Indians are so miserably poor that millions of us die for want of a handful of rice, while here people spend money lavishly only for personal comforts! Who will raise the Indians and give them food? O Mother, tell me how I can serve them!' Such was Swamiji's burning love for India!

A similar incident took place at Belur Math after Swamiji's return from the West. Swami Vijnanananda, a brother disciple of Swamiji, was then staying at the Math. Swamiji loved him and affectionately called him 'Peshan' for his name was Hariprasanna before joining the Order.

Swami Vijnanananda occupied the room next to Swamiji's. One night his sleep was broken by the sound of sobbing and he rushed to Swamiji's room. There he found Swamiji bitterly crying. Swamiji did not notice that his brother-disciple had come into his room.

'Are you not feeling well Swamiji?', asked Vijnanananda. Swamiji was startled, 'Oh, Peshan,' he said, 'I presumed you were asleep. No, my dear, I am not sick. But I cannot sleep as long as my country suffers. I was crying and praying to Sri Ramakrishna that we would soon see better days.'

Swamiji was an embodiment of love for India and her people. He would inspire everybody who came in contact with him to love India. Sister Christine writes : 'Our love for India came to birth, I think, when we first heard him say the word "India", in that marvellous voice

of his. It seems incredible that so much could have been put into one small word of five letters. There was love, passion, pride, longing, adoration, tragedy, chivalry, and again love. Whole volumes could not have produced such a feeling in others. It had the magic power of creating love in those who heard it. Ever after, India became the land of heart's desire. Everything concerning her became of interest—became living—her people, her history, architecture, her manners and customs, her rivers, mountains, plains, her culture, her great spiritual concepts, her scriptures.'

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Swamiji's lectures were very popular in London. One evening he was talking about *Rāja-Yoga* and all those present were listening with rapt attention. But good things are not always appreciated by everybody. An Anglo-Indian started making silly criticisms of Swamiji who at first ignored him and went on speaking inspiringly on the subject. The audience became very much annoyed with the person at first, but seeing that Swamiji was unmoved, they kept quiet.

The Anglo-Indian gentleman became increasingly boisterous and flouted all norms of decency. When Swamiji paid tribute to Buddha, he criticized Buddha, when Swamiji praised the *sannyāsins*, he called them thieves and impostors; and finally when he learned that Swamiji was a Bengali, he began to vilify the people of Bengal and to eulogize the British.

Being interrupted time and again, Swamiji now turned towards the man and began to cite from the pages of history many instances of British criminal behaviour. Battered thus by the fearless Indian monk right in the heart of Britain, the Anglo-Indian gentleman broke into tears. Swamiji gracefully returned to his subject and concluded his speech as if nothing had happened.

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In one of his discourses at a Western American town, Swamiji said that one who has attained absolute truth or knowledge remains the same under all circumstances; he is always calm and unruffled by things external. A few churlish cowboys heard this lecture and decided to test him. When Swamiji went to their village to deliver a lecture they asked him to stand on a reversed tub and address the gathering.

Swamiji did as requested and then became absorbed in his subject. The cowboys meanwhile started firing from close range, the bullets whizzing past Swamiji's ears. This did not perturb Swamiji in the least. He continued his speech with as much composure as he started with. When he had finished, the cowboys surrounded him, shook hands with him and declared : 'Yes Swami, you are absolutely genuine. You are what you preach!'

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Swamiji became well-known in America. Once he was given a rousing reception at a railway station as he got down from the train. A Negro porter went forward to shake hands with him saying : 'Congratulations! I am extremely delighted that a man of my race has attained such great honour! The entire Negro community in this country feels proud of you!' Swamiji eagerly shook hands with the porter and said warmly, 'Thank you! Thank you, brother!' He refused to deny he was a Negro.

Swamiji was insulted, humiliated and refused entry into many hotels in the South on suspicion that he was a Negro. But he never protested or explained that he was an Indian. A Western disciple once asked him why he did not tell them he was from India in such situations. 'What!', Swamiji replied, 'Rise at the expense of another! I did not come to earth for that!'

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Madame Emma Calvé was a celebrated opera singer in France. She also enjoyed great popularity in the United States. But despite her professional success, her personal life was miserable. she was very obstinate and quick-tempered and had strong likes and dislikes. Naturally she had no peace of mind. To add to her suffering, in March 1894 she lost her only daughter in an accident in Chicago. After this tragedy she nearly lost

her mental balance. At this moment, a friend of hers wanted to take her to Swamiji, but Madame Calvé refused, for she thought there was only one way left for her to get permanent peace and that was to commit suicide. She tried four times to do this but failed. At last she decided to go to Swamiji, having seen how he had helped some of her friends.

She went to the place where he was staying and was admitted to the study. When she was called in, she found Swamiji 'seated in a noble attitude of meditation, his robe of saffron-yellow falling in straight lines to the floor, his head, swathed in a turban, bent forward, his eyes on the ground'.

Swamiji did not look up, but in a gentle, affectionate voice said, 'My child, what a troubled atmosphere you have about you! Be calm! It is essential!' In her memoirs Madame Calvé wrote : 'Then in a quiet voice, untroubled and aloof, this man, who did not even know my name, talked to me of my secret problems and anxieties. He spoke of things that I thought were unknown even to my nearest friends.' When it was time for her to leave, Swamiji showered blessings on her and said : 'You must forget. Become gay and happy again. Build up your health. Do not dwell in silence upon your sorrows.' In a moment Madame Calvé felt she had no more sorrows, no more anxieties. In her words, 'He seemed to have emptied my brain of all its feverish

complexities and placed there instead his clear and calming thoughts.'

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Madame Calvé gave her friend, Madame Paul Verdier, the following account of Swamiji's encounter with the American millionaire John D. Rockefeller.

According to Madame Verdier's notes, Mr Rockefeller had heard from his friends about Swamiji. They wanted him to meet the extraordinary Indian monk, but on one pretext or another, he refused. He was very strong-willed and it was difficult for anyone to change his decision. But one day, on an impulse, Rockefeller went to the house of a friend in Chicago where Swamiji was staying. Brushing aside the butler who opened the door, he demanded to see the Hindu monk.

The butler ushered him into the living room, and not waiting to be announced, Rockefeller entered Swamiji's adjoining study. He was greatly surprised to see Swamiji seated at his writing table not even lifting his eyes to see who had entered. After a while, as with Calvé, Swamiji told Rockefeller much about his past that was not known to anyone but himself, and made him understand that the money he had already accumulated was not his, that he was only a channel and that his duty was to do good to the world—that God had given him his wealth in order that he might have an opportunity to help

people. Rockefeller was annoyed that anyone dared to talk to him that way. He left the room in irritation, not even saying goodbye. But about a week later, again without being announced, he entered Swamiji's study and finding him the same as before, threw on his desk a paper which told of his plans to donate an enormous sum of money toward the financing of a public institution.

'Well, there you are,' he said, 'you must be satisfied now, and you can thank me for it !' Swamiji didn't even lift his eyes, didn't move. Then taking the paper, he quietly read it and said, 'It is for you to thank me.'

This was Rockefeller's first large donation to the cause of public welfare. Later he became widely known for his philanthropy.

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It was again in Chicago that Swamiji met Robert Ingersoll, the famous orator and agnostic. They were poles apart, while Swamiji was spirituality in flesh and blood having unshakable faith in transcendental truth and was only against religious fanaticism and pretensions, Ingersoll was opposed to all religious beliefs and had no faith in transcendental truth. Nevertheless, they met on more than one occasion and discussed religious and philosophical matters.

One day Ingersoll said to Swamiji, 'I belive in making the most out of this world, in squeezing the orange dry, because this world is all we are sure of.'

Swamiji replied : 'I know a better way to squeeze the orange of this world than you do; and I get more out of it. I know I cannot die, so I am not in a hurry. I know that there is no fear, so I enjoy the squeezing. I have no duty, no bondage of wife and children and property; and so I can love all men and women. Everyone is God to me. Think of the joy of loving man as God! Squeeze your orange this way and get ten thousandfold more out of it. Get every single drop!'

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Before he left London, one of his British friends put this question to him : 'Swami, how do you like now your motherland after four years' experience of the luxurious, glorious, powerful West?' Swamiji said : 'India I loved before I came away. Now the very dust of India has become holy to me, the very air is now to me holy; it is now the holy land, the place of pilgrimage, the *tīrtha*!'

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One day in Calcutta, Swamiji told Priyanath Sinha, his disciple, that a man becomes bold and courageous when he truly loves his own religion, and that such a steadfast love could bring about the unity that was lacking among Indians. In this connection, Swamiji narrated an incident that took place on board the ship that was carrying him to India.

During the voyage two Christian missionaries had come to him and insisted on discussing the merits and

demerits of Hinduism and Christianity. As the missionaries began to lose ground in the debate, they grew increasingly belligerent and started slandering the Hindus and their religion. Swamiji stood it as long as he could; then walking close to them seized one of the missionaries by the collar and said jokingly yet firmly, 'If you abuse my religion again, I will throw you overboard!' The frightened missionary 'shook in his boots' and said under his breath, 'Let me go, sir! I will never do it again.' After that, Swamiji told Priyanath, the missionary treated him respectfully whenever they met.

Having told this story, Swamiji turned to his disciple and asked him what would he do if someone insulted his mother. Priyanath replied : 'Why, I would catch him by the neck and give him a good dressing-down!' Pleased with the reply, Swamiji said, 'Well Sinha, if you had the same unflinching loyalty to your religion, the true Mother of our country, you could not bear to see the conversion of your Hindu brethren to Christianity. You see this occurring everyday, yet you are quite indifferent. Where is your faith! Where is your patriotism! Everyday Christian missionaries abuse Hinduism to your face, and yet how many are there amongst you who will stand up in its defence?'

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During the sea-voyage just referred to, Swamiji had with him a number of English disciples. When their ship

cast anchor at Aden, Swamiji disembarked and went to see some places of local interest, three miles from the port. The disciples followed him.

As the party was moving about, Swamiji suddenly spotted an Indian betel-leaf seller. He left his companions and hurried to where the man was seated. It was a great joy for him to talk to an Indian after such a long time.

Meanwhile, his disciples were looking for him. They did not know where he had gone. After some time they found him sitting comfortably beside the betel-leaf seller. It was a wonderful sight! They smiled when they heard him say to the simple-looking *pān-wallah*, 'Brother, do give me your pipe.' The *pān-wallah* gave his hookah to Swamiji who began to smoke it with great satisfaction, Swamiji's boyish simplicity, love for his fellow countryman and his capacity to get joy out of small things greatly impressed Captain Sevier and the others.

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Swamiji was not keeping well since his return from the West. His health was deteriorating day by day. So on the advice of his brother monks, disciples and well-wishers, he went to Darjeeling for a change.

One day, when he was out for a morning walk, he was pained to see a Bhutia woman trudging along with a heavy load on her back. Those who were with Swamiji noticed Swamiji's feeling for her, sharing every bit of her



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suffering as it were! Suddenly the woman stumbled and fell down with all her burden. She sustained serious injuries to her ribs. But Swamiji also felt excruciating pain in his ribs at the same time. He stood still for some time, then said, 'I cannot move. I am suffering from terrible pain!' The companions asked, 'Where do you feel the pain, Swamiji?' Pointing to his ribs, Swamiji said : 'Right here! Did you not see how badly that woman was injured a few moments ago?'

Though rare, such things happen in the lives of those who are very sensitive and who have great sympathy for others. We find such incidents also in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. One day, Sri Ramakrishna cried out in pain when a boatman on the Gaṅgā was struck by another boatman.

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There was no change in the ways and behaviour of Swamiji towards his friends even when he became famous and was worshipped by thousands of devotees at home and abroad. He was the same 'Naren' to them throughout.

When in Lahore, Swamiji met his boyhood friend Motilal Bose by chance. Motilal, who owned the Great Indian Circus, was there in connection with a show of his troupe. Having met his friend after a long time Swamiji plunged into conversation with him. But Motilal felt uneasy. He said, 'Brother, how should I address you, as "Naren" or "Swamiji"?'

Swamiji burst out laughing and said : 'Are you crazy? My dear Moti, nothing has changed. You are to me the same "Moti" and I am "Naren".' Swamiji uttered these words with so much love and tenderness that Motilal was deeply moved and forgot all his diffidence.

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Another touching incident occurred at Alwar where following his return from America, Swamiji had gone to meet his intimate friends and disciples. Many admirers, friends, and notable personalities assembled at the Alwar railway station to receive him, but Swamiji's attention fell on one person, apparently a man of no significance standing humbly at the edge of the crowd. The man was shabbily dressed but he was beaming with joy seeing his Swamiji after such a long time. He too wanted to be in Swamiji's company, but did not have the courage to force his way through the crowd. Swamiji noticed him and called out, 'Ramasnehi! Ramasnehi!' The crowd made way for the simple-looking man who then came forward to greet Swamiji. Swamiji welcomed him and affectionately chatted with him.

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Many rich people who were devoted to Swamiji invited him to dinner during his brief stay at Alwar, but Swamiji first accepted the invitation of a poor old woman who during his wandering days had offered him

food when he had nothing to eat. Swamiji did not forget her kindness. On reaching Alwar, Swamiji had sent a message to her saying that he wished to be treated to some of the thick chapatis he was offered years before and which he relished very much.

The old woman was beside herself with joy. She prepared the chapatis with great care and waited eagerly for Swamiji and his disciples. When they came, she lovingly served them the simple meal. Swamiji enjoyed the food and told his disciples, 'See how devout, how motherly, this old woman is! And how pure and simple the food is!' Before parting Swamiji silently thrust a hundred rupee note into the hands of the master of the house to be given to the old woman.

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In 1890, during Swamiji's wanderings in the Himalayas, Swami Akhandananda was with him. One day, when they were about two miles from Almora, Swamiji almost collapsed because of hunger and exhaustion. A Muslim fakir who lived near by, having found the unknown monk in such a condition, quickly brought a cucumber to him. But Swamiji was too weak to lift it to his mouth, so the fakir fed him. After this Swamiji felt a little better.

When Swamiji returned to Almora seven years later, a meeting was arranged by the local people to welcome him. As the function was going on, Swamiji's attention suddenly fell on a man in the crowd. The man was none

else but the fakir who had come to his rescue years before. Swamiji recognized him and bringing him before the audience, announced that the fakir had once saved his life. He later gave him some money. The fakir, however, did not remember Swamiji.

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One winter Swamiji went to Deoghar as a guest of Priyanath Mukerjee accompanied by Swami Niranjanananda. One day, while taking a walk with his brother disciple, Swamiji saw a man lying helpless by the side of the road writhing in pain. Swamiji moved closer to the man and found he was suffering from acute dysentery. He felt the man needed immediate medical treatment, but first, he must be moved from the roadside. But where to take him? He thought of Priyanath's house. However, Swamiji himself was only a guest, how could he take this unknown man there? Priyanathbabu might be offended. He thus hesitated a moment and then made up his mind to serve the helpless man at all costs. So with the help of Swami Niranjanananda, he brought the man to Priyanathbabu's house and placed him on a bed, cleaned him thoroughly, clothed him and began to apply hot fomentations. As a result, the man soon recovered. Instead of being vexed, Priyanathbabu was filled with admiration for this wonderful expression of Swamiji's love.

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A preacher of the Cow Protection Society once approached Swamiji for financial help. He told Swamiji that the society had set up cow infirmaries in different parts of the country to protect mother-cows from the hands of the butcher. Swamiji first gave him a patient hearing, then he said, 'A terrible famine has now broken out in Central India. The Indian Government has published a death roll of nine lakhs of people. Has your Society done anything to help them?' The preacher answered in the negative and said that their organization was exclusively for the protection of mother-cows and that they did not see any reason why they should help the famine-stricken people, for it was their *karma* that had invited the calamity.

This atrocious explanation angered Swamiji, but he controlled his rage and said in a quiet yet firm voice : 'I have not the least sympathy for those organizations which do not feel for man, which do not offer a handful of rice to save the lives of their starving brothers while distributing piles of food to birds and beasts in the name of charity and love. I believe they are of no use to society. If one goes strictly by the theory of *karma*, then all efforts, all struggles for anything on earth, including your drive to save the cows, become utterly meaningless. It can be well argued then that the mother-cows fall into the hands of butchers and die according to their own *karma* and we need not do anything about this.'

The preacher did not know what to say, but to bolster his argument, he replied : 'Yes, Swami what you say is true; but the scriptures say that the cow is our mother.' Swamiji said sarcastically, 'No doubt you are right; who else could give birth to such accomplished children!'

The preacher failed to understand what Swamiji meant and once again begged for funds for the Cow Protection Society. When he had finished, Swamiji said : 'I am a *sannyāsin*, a penniless fakir. How can I give you monetary help? But if some day I have money I shall first spend it in the service of man. Man is to be served and saved first. He must be given food, education and spirituality. If any money is still left after attending to all these human needs, perhaps something could be given to your society.'

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The famous editor of *Hitavādī*, Pandit Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar, came to see Swamiji along with two friends, one of whom was a Punjabi. Knowing this, Swamiji talked with them very earnestly about the grim food situation facing Punjab. Swamiji's mind at that time was so occupied with the terrible famine going on in India that he did not discuss spiritual matters with Deuskar and his friends. Before taking leave the Punjabi gentleman said to Swamiji, 'Sir, we expected to hear something spiritual from you today. But, unfortunately,

our conversation drifted towards mundane matters. I believe it was a mere waste of time.'

On hearing this, Swamijii became very serious and said, 'Sir, as long as even a stray dog of my country remains without food, my religion will be to feed and take care of him. All else is either non-religion or false religion!' The three visitors were stuck dumb by Swamiji's flaming words. Years after his passing away, Pandit Deuskar, when relating the incident, said that those words remained ever grafted on his mind and made him realize, for the first time, what true patriotism meant.

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A north Indian Pandit once came to Swamiji with the intention of outshining him in a discussion on Vedanta, but Swamiji was in no mood then to discuss Vedanta. He was constantly thinking about the people groaning under the impact of the country-wide famine. He said, 'Panditji, first of all try to ameliorate the terrible distress that is prevailing everywhere, to still the heart-rending cry of your hungry countrymen for a morsel of food; after that come to me to have a debate on Vedanta. To stake one's whole life and soul to save thousands who are dying of starvation—this is the essence of the religion of the Vedanta.'

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Swamiji was staying at the garden-house of Gopal Lal Seal in Cossipore. One day a young man came to him and said, 'Swamiji, I have visited many places and have had intimate association with many religious sects; yet I find I do not as yet understand what Truth is. Everyday I close the door and sit in meditation, but peace remains as elusive as ever! Swamiji, tell me why?'

Swamiji patiently listened to him, then he said : My child, if you want peace, you have to do exactly the opposite of what you have been doing so long. You have to keep your door open, you have to look around. If you do, you will be surprised to find how many people are anxiously waiting for your help! Help them, feed them, give them water to drink—serve them as much as you can. I guarantee, you will get peace.

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The day after his return from Deoghar, Swamiji told his brother-monks that he wanted them to get ready to go to all corners of the world to spread the gospel of their Master as did the disciples of Buddha. To begin with, Swamiji chose two of his disciples, Swami Virajananda and Swami Prakashananda for this mission and asked them to go to East Bengal (Now Bangladesh).

When Swami Virajananda said, 'Swamiji, I know nothing! What shall I preach?' Swamiji replied, 'Then go and preach that. That in itself is a wonderful message!'

The disciple was still unconvinced. He prayed to Swamiji that before being asked to plunge into activities, he be allowed to realize his Self by practising further spiritual disciplines. Swamiji did not like this idea and admonished his young disciple, 'You will go to hell if you seek your own salvation! Kill that desire first. That is the hardest of all disciplines. Try hard for the salvation of others if you want to scale the peak of spiritual attainment.'

Then he softened his voice and said, 'Work, my children, work heart and soul without caring for results. What if you go to hell while trying to do good to others? I say that is infinitely better than winning heaven only for yourself.'

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One day at the home of Balaram Basu, Swamiji was talking enthusiastically about the Vedas before his disciple Sharat Chandra Chakravarty. Girish Chandra Ghosh, Sri Ramakrishna's householder disicple, was also present. Both of them were listening to Swamiji's captivating exposition of the subject. But after Swamiji had spoken at length, Girish said to him : Naren, let me ask you one question. I know you have studied the Vedas and Vedanta philosophy in great detail, but do these scriptures suggest a way out of the poverty, scarcity of food and all the other great problems plaguing the country? Mrs———, who used to prepare

meals for fifty people every day, has been without food for the past three days : a housewife was killed by rowdies the other day, and a helpless widow I know has been dispossessed of her property by her relatives. Can your Vedas give them justice? Can your holy scriptures redress their sufferings and assure us that such things will never happen again?

Girish went on depicting the dismal picture of society and cited more examples. Swamiji sat speechless. Tears rolled down his cheeks, and he hurriedly left the room. Then Girish said to Sharat Chandra : Did you notice what a great heart your Guru has? I love and respect Swamiji not because he is well-versed in the Vedas, but because of his infinite love and his readiness to share the sufferings of others. You saw yourself just now how bitterly he wept when he heard about the miseries of his countrymen ! It is neither the Vedas nor the Vedanta but love and compassion for humanity that govern Vivekananda.

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Swamiji's health rapidly deteriorated after he returned from the West. His physicians advised him to take a complete rest, so he went to Darjeeling. But after a few days, he received news that plague had broken out in Calcutta. How Swamiji felt at that time is known from a letter he wrote to Josephine MacLeod in April 29, 1998. In that letter he said that he had decided to

sacrifice his life in the service of the plague-stricken people of the city in which he was born and that would be the best way to attain *nirvāṇa.* Swamiji rushed to Calcutta, and on reaching there found that the fear that afflicted the minds of the people of Calcutta was deadlier than the disease itself. People were deserting their homes in sheer panic. Swamiji understood the gravity of the situation and printed a plague-manifesto to dispel their fear. The manifesto, which was distributed among the people, stated that the Ramakrishna Mission was there to help them in every way possible. He also decided to open service centres in different parts of the city. But the relief work required much money. When a brother disciple asked Swamiji where the money would come from, he replied without the slightest hesitation; 'We are monks. We can sleep under the trees and live on alms. If I can save the lives of millions I do not mind selling the Math.'

Fortunately this extreme measure was not needed as money came through other sources. But Swamiji's declaration revealed his heart, his boundless love and compassion for his fellowmen. How much he had to bleed to procure a piece of land for the Math, his life's dream. Still, he was ready to sell away that Math, if by that he could help the suffering people.

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Swamiji's love for humanity was so profound that when alone he often shed tears thinking about the

miseries of men. The following incident happened after his first visit to America : One day Swami Turiyananda came to see him at the residence of Balaram Basu where he had been staying. Turiyananda found Swamiji walking alone on the verandah. He was so lost in thought that he did not notice that his brother-monk had come to meet him. After a little while, Swamiji began to hum a well-known song of Mīrābāī, with tears rolling down his cheeks. Then he covered his face with both hands, leaned on the railings and, continued to sing : 'Oh, nobody understands my sorrow! He, who does not bleed, does not feel the pain!' Narrating this incident, Swami Turiyananda later said, 'His voice pierced my heart like an arrow, moving me to tears. Not knowing the cause of Swamiji's sorrow I was very uneasy. But it soon flashed upon me that it was a tremendous universal sympathy with the suffering and oppressed that was the cause of his mood.'

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An interesting thing happened when Swamiji went to the United States for the second time. One day when he was walking along the bank of a river, he found a group of youngsters shooting at a string of eggshells bobbing up on the water. The youths tried in turn, but none could hit the target. Swamiji, who was watching all this, felt amused. He could not suppress his smile and this did not escape the attention of one of the young men who said in

a challenging tone : 'The task is not as easy as it looks, sir. Let us see how you do it!'

Swamiji said nothing, but took the gun from the boy's hand and hit twelve shells in succession. The youths were awestruck and supposed Swamiji was a brilliant marksman. Swamiji could read their minds. He told them he had never in his life fired a shot before and that the secret of his success was concentration.

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On his way back to India, Swamiji stopped off in Cairo. He had with him a number of his Western disciples and friends. One day while taking a walk, Swamiji and his party lost their way and found themselves in a red-light district. It took no time for Swamiji's friends to understand they were in the wrong place. They made an attempt to take Swamiji away from the squalid, ill-smelling street. But Swamiji detached himself from the group and approached the half-clad women sitting on a way-side bench. He looked at them with pity and muttered : 'Poor children ! Poor creatures! They have put their divinity into their beauty!' He began to weep and the women, who had been making silly gestures at him became embarrassed and hung their heads in shame. One of them kissed the hem of his robe and said : 'Here is one who has seen God!' Turning to Swamiji she said : 'You are a Man of God!' Another woman covered her face in remorse.

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Once when Swamiji was travelling by train, a poor Muslim hawker selling boiled gram boarded his compartment. As soon as Swamiji saw him, he started speaking with the *brahmacārī* accompanying him about eating gram. 'You see', Swamiji said, 'gram makes you strong'. And then pointing at the vendor, he said to the *brahmacārī*, 'How about having some?' The *brahmacārī* knew Swamiji's nature well. He readily understood that what Swamiji wanted was to help the poor man and not to eat his gram. So the *brahmacārī* bought gram worth one paise but paid the man four annas.

Swamiji was very sharp-eyed. He asked the *brahmacārī* how much he had paid. 'Four annas', replied the *brahmacārī*. Then Swamiji said to him affectionately, 'My child, that is too little! He has a wife and children at home. Give him a rupee.' The *brahmacārī* followed Swamiji's instruction. Swamiji, however, did not eat the gram.

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Swami Vijnanananda once told of an incident which revealed Swamiji's superhuman sensibility. Swami Vijnanananda used to stay in the room next to Swamiji's at Belur Math. One night he woke up at 2 a.m., came out of his room and was surprised to find Swamiji moving restlessly along the portico. Vijnanananda asked him, 'Swamiji, why are you not in bed ? Don't you feel sleepy?'

'I was sleeping well', said Swamiji, 'but suddenly I felt a sort of shock and woke up. I am sure there has been an accident somewhere in the world and that many people must have lost their lives.'

Swami Vijnanananda did not take Swamiji's words seriously at first. It seemed incredible to him that Swamiji while lying on his bed could have become aware of a far off occurrence. But to his amazement, he read in the newspaper the next morning that many people were killed in a volcanic eruption near Fiji. The eruption had occurred at the exact moment when Swamiji had received that shock.

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Swamiji often used to tell his disciples about the past glories of India, but at the same time he said that India in the future would be even greater. One day at Belur Math he said to them, 'Believe me, I have had a vision in which I saw clearly what would happen to India in the coming four or five centuries.'

On another occasion he made a series of remarkable predictions. He said : 'India will be free in another fifty years and freedom will come in an unusual way. A great war will flare up within twenty years, and if the Western nations do not give up, their stark materialism, another world war is inevitable.' Swamiji also prophesied that 'India, when independent, will embrace the materialism of the West and attain material prosperity to such an extent that it will surpass its past

records in that field.' He also foretold that 'Countries such as America would become increasingly spiritual because they will have realized from the height of material prosperity the simple truth that gross materialism cannot give eternal peace.'

In another context Swamiji said that if and when the British should leave India, there would be a great danger of India's being conquered by China.

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Josephine MacLeod, the great admirer of Swamiji, who thought of Swamiji as her friend, once asked him : 'Swamiji, how can I best help you?' Swamiji's answer was, 'Love India!'

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Speaking of himself, Swamiji once said that he was a 'Condensed India'. Indeed, his love for India was so profound that eventually he became its embodiment. Vivekananda and India became one. Sister Nivedita echoed this conviction when she said : 'India was Swamiji's greatest passion ... India throbbed in his breast, India beat in his pulses, India was his daydream, India was his nightmare. Not only that. He himself became India. He was the embodiment of India in flesh and blood. He was India, he was Bhārat—the very symbol of her spirituality, her purity, her wisdom, her power, her vision and her destiny.'

When we study Swamiji's life we cannot but be convinced that he was unique in all respects. There was

no one, who better loved India, who was more proud of this country, who worked more zealously for its well-being. Yet, it is also true that nobody lashed out at the imbecility, cowardice and incompetence of Indians as mercilessly and vigorously as he did. He touched both extremes for he knew Indians intimately. Indeed, Swamiji could read India as meticulously as a loving mother can read her child's mind and know better than the child itself what it needs. We get a perfect picture of India, its past, present and future from Swamiji's thoughts. That is why Rabindranath Tagore said to Romain Rolland : 'If you want to know India, study Vivekananda.'

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India and the Ways to Her Regeneration

—Swami Vivekananda

If there is any land on this earth that can lay claim to be the blessed *puṇyabhūmi* (sacred land) ... the land where humanity has attained its highest towards gentleness, towards generosity, towards purity, towards calmness, above all, the land of introspection and of spirituality—it is India.

And I challenge anybody to show one single period of her national life when India was lacking in spiritual giants, capable of moving the world. But her work is spiritual, and that cannot be done with blasts of war-trumpets or the march of cohorts. Her influence has always fallen upon the world like that of the gentle dew, unheard and scarcely marked, yet bringing into bloom the fairest flowers of the earth.

The debt which the world owes to our Motherland is immense.

In religion, she has exerted a great influence on Christianity, as the very teachings of Christ would [could] be traced back to those of Buddha... . The same holds good with respect to sciences. India has given to antiquity the earliest scientifical physicians,

and, according to Sir William Hunter, she has even contributed to modern medical science by the discovery of various chemicals and by teaching you how to reform misshapen ears and noses. Even more it has done in Mathematics, for Algebra, Geometry, Astronomy, and the triumph of modern science—Mixed Mathematics—were all invented in India, just so much as the ten numerals, the very cornerstone of all present civilization, were discovered in India, and are in reality, Sanskrit words.

In philosophy we are even now head and shoulders above any other nation, as Schopenhauer, the great German philosopher, has confessed. In music, India gave to the world her system of notation with the seven cardinal notes and the diatonic scale... . In philology, our Sanskrit language is now universally acknowledged to be the foundation of all European languages... .

In literature, our epics and poems and dramas rank as high as those of any language; our *Śakuntalā* was summarized by Germany's greatest poet, as 'heaven and earth united'. India has given to the world the fables of Aesop, which were copied by Aesop from an old Sanskrit book; it has given the Arabian Nights, yes, even the story of Cinderella and the Bean Stalks. In manufacture, India was the first to make cotton and purple [dye], it was proficient in

all works of jewelry, and the very word 'sugar', as well as the article itself, is the product of India. Lastly she has invented the game of chess and the cards and the dice. So great, in fact, was the superiority of India in every respect, that it drew to her borders the hungry cohorts of Europe, and thereby indirectly brought about the discovery of America.

As I look back upon the history of my country, I do not find in the whole world another country which has done quite so much for the inprovement of the human mind. Therefore I have no words of condemnation for my nation. I tell them, 'You have done well; only try to do better.'

Destroy nothing

Do not destroy. Iconoclastic reformers do no good to the world. Break not, pull not anything down, but build. Help, if you can; if you cannot, fold your hands and stand by and see things go on. Do not injure, if you cannot render help... . Take man where he stands, and from there give him a lift... . What can you and I do? Do you think you can teach even a child? You cannot. The child teaches himself.

Salutations to the working masses

Ye labouring classes of India, as a result of your silent, constant labours Babylon, Persia, Alexandria, Greece, Rome, Venice, Genoa, Baghdad, Samarqand,

Spain, Portugal, France, Denmark, Holland, and England have successively attained supremacy and eminence! And you?—Well, who cares to think of you!... Your ancestors wrote a few philosophical works, penned a dozen or so epics, or built a number of temples—that is all, and you rend the skies with triumphal shouts; while those whose heart's blood has contributed to all the progress that has been made in the world—well, who cares to praise them? The world-conquering heroes of spirituality, war, and poetry are in the eyes of all, and they have received the homage of mankind. But where nobody looks, no one gives a word of encouragement, where everybody hates—that living amid such circumstances and displaying boundless patience, infinite love, and dauntless practicality, our proletariat are doing their duty in their homes day and night, without the slightest murmur—well, is there no heroism in this? Many turn out to be heroes when they have got some great task to perform. Even a coward easily gives up his life, and the most selfish man behaves disinterestedly, when there is a multitude to cheer them on; but blessed indeed is he who manifests the same unselfishness and devotion to duty in the smallest of acts, unnoticed by all—and it is you who are actually doing this, ye ever-trampled labouring classes of India! I bow to you.

The great national sin

I consider that the great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and that is one of the causes of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed, and well cared for ... . If we want to regenerate India, we must work for them.

Our mission is for the destitute, the poor,and the illiterate peasantry and labouring classes, and if after everything has been done for them first, there is spare .ime, then only for the gentry.

Religion is not to blame

The poor, the low, the sinner in India have no friends, no help... . They sink lower and lower every day... . Thoughtful people within the last few years have seen it, but unfortunately laid it at the door of the Hindu religion, and to them, the only way of bettering is by crushing this grandest religion of the world. Hear me, my friend, I have discovered the secret through the grace of the Lord. Religion is not in fault. On the other hand, your religion teaches you that every being is only your own self multiplied. But it was the want of practical application, the want of sympathy—the want of heart... . This state ot things must be removed, not by destroying religion but by following the great teachings of the Hindu faith, and

joining with it the wonderful sympathy of that logical development of Hinduism—Buddhism.

The modern reformers saw no way to reform but by first crushing out the religion of India. They tried, and they failed. Why? Because few of them ever studied their own religion, and not *one ever underwent* the training necessary to understand the *Mother of all religions*. I claim that no destruction of religion is necessary to improve the Hindu society, and that this state of society exists not on account of religion, but because religion has not been applied to society as it should have been. This I am ready to prove from our old books, every word of it. This is what I teach, and this is what we must struggle all our lives to carry out.

Know your past

Out of the past is built the future. Look back, therefore, as far as you can, drink deep of the eternal fountains that are behind, and after that, look forward, march forward and make India brighter, greater, much higher than she ever was. Our ancestors were great. We must first recall that. We must learn the elements of our being, the blood that courses in our veins ... . We must build an India yet greater than what she has been.

Nowadays everybody blames those who constantly look back to their past. It is said that so much looking back to the past is the cause of all India's woes. To me, on the contrary, it seems that the opposite is true... .

The more, therefore, the Hindus study the past, the more glorious will be their future, and whoever tries to bring the past to the door of every one, is a great benefactor to his nation. The degeneration of India came not because the laws and customs of the ancients were bad, but because they were not allowed to be carried to their legitimate conclusions.

Deluge the land with spiritual ideas

Keep the motto before you—'Elevation of the masses without injuring their religion.'

Can you become an occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work, and energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts? This is to be done, and *we will do it.*

In religion lies the vitality of India.

If you succeed in the attempt to throw off your religion and take up either politics, or society, or any other things as your centre, as the vitality of your national life, the result will be that you will become extinct. To prevent this you must make all and everything work through that vitality of your religion.

So every improvement in India requires first of all an upheaval in religion. Before flooding India with socialistic or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas.

I do not mean to say that other things are not necessary. I do not mean to say that political or social

improvements are not necessary, but what I mean is this, and I want you to bear it in mind, that they are secondary here and that religion is primary. The Indian mind is first religious, then anything else.

In India, social reform has to be preached by showing how much more spiritual a life the new system will bring; and politics has to be preached by showing how much it will improve the one thing that the nation wants—its spirituality.

Not by religion alone

First bread and then religion.

Material civilization, nay, even luxury, is necessary to create work for the poor. Bread! Bread! I do not believe in a God who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven! pooh! India is to be raised, the poor are to be fed, education is to be spread, and the evil of priestcraft is to be removed... . Root up priestcraft from the old religion, and you get the best religion in the world. Do you understand me? Can you make a European society with India's religion? I believe it is possible and must be.

Worship of womanhood

The uplift of the women, the awakening of the masses must come first, and then only can any real good come about for the country, for India.

All nations have attained greatness by paying proper respect to women. That country and that nation which

do not respect women have never become great, nor will ever be in future.

The urgent need for education

The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education, *to develop their lost individuality*... . They are to be given ideas; their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them; and then they will work out their own salvation. Every nation, every man, and every woman must work out their own salvation. Give them ideas—that is the only help they require, and then the rest must follow as the effect. Ours is to put the chemicals together, the crystallization comes in the law of nature. Our duty is to put ideas into their heads, they will do the rest. This is what is to be done in India.

A few men who think that certain things are evil will not make a nation move... . First educate the nation... . Even for social reform, the first duty is to educate the people, and you will have to wait till that time comes.

Self-help

All the wealth of the world cannot help one little Indian village if the people are not taught to help themselves. Our work should be mainly *educational*, both moral and intellectual.

Reciprocity between the East and the West

Give and take is the law, and if India wants to raise herself once more, it is absolutely necessary that she brings out her treasures and throws them broadcast among the nations of the earth, and in return be ready to receive what others have to give her. Expansion is life, contraction is death. Love is life and hatred is death. We commenced to die the day we began to hate other races, and nothing can prevent our death unless we come back to expansion, which is life. We must mix, therefore, with all the races of the earth.

For a complete civilization the world is waiting, waiting for the treasures to come out of India, waiting for the marvellous spiritual inheritance of the race, which, through decades of degradation and misery, the nation has still clutched to her breast... . Therefore we must go out, exchange our spirituality for anything they have to give us; for the marvels of the region of spirit we will exchange the marvels of the region of matter. We will not be students always, but teachers also. There cannot be friendship without equality; and there cannot be equality when one party is always the teacher and the other party sits always at his feet. If you want to become equal with the Englishman or the American, you will have to teach as well as to learn, and you have plenty yet to teach to the world for centuries to come.

India has to learn from Europe the conquest of external nature, and Europe has to learn from India the conquest of internal nature. Then there will be neither Hindus nor Europeans—there will be the ideal humanity which has conquered both the nature, the external and the internal. We have developed one phase of humanity, and they another. It is the union of the two that is wanted.

New India has to be built upon Indian traditions

We must grow according to our nature. Vain is it to attempt the lines of action that foreign societies have engrafted upon us; it is impossible... . I do not condemn the institutions of other races; they are good for them, but not for us. What is meat for them may be poison for us. This is the first lesson to learn. With other sciences, other institutions, and other traditions behind them, they have got their present system. We, with our traditions, with thousands of years of *karma* behind us, naturally can only follow our own bent, run in our own grooves; and that we shall have to do.

Call to the builders of the nation

Be patriots, love the race which has done such great things for us in the past.

My brave boys... . Nothing else is necessary but these—*Love, Sincerity,* and *Patience.* What is life but growth, i.e. expansion, i.e. *love*? Therefore all love is

life, it is the only law of life, all selfishness is *death*, and this is true here or hereafter. Even if there is no hereafter, it is life to do good, it is death not to do good to others. Ninety per cent of human brutes you see are dead, are *ghosts*—for none lives, my boys, but he who loves. Feel, my children, feel for the poor, the ignorant, the downtrodden, feel till the heart stops and the brain reels and you think you will go mad—then pour the soul out at the feet of the Lord and then will come power, help, and indomitable energy. Struggle, struggle was my motto for the last ten years. Struggle, still say I. When it was all dark I used to say, struggle, when light is breaking in, I still say, struggle. Be not afraid, my children. Look not up in that attitude of fear towards that infinite starry vault as if it would crush you. Wait ! In a few hours more the whole of it will be under your feet. Wait, money does not pay, nor name; fame does not pay, nor learning. It is love that pays; it is character that cleaves its way through adamantine walls of difficulties.

Three things are necessary to make every man great, every nation great :

1. Conviction of the powers of goodness.
2. Absence of jealousy and suspicion.
3. Helping all who are trying to be and do good.

Do not be afraid of a small beginning, great things come afterwards. Be courageous. Do not try to lead your brethren, but serve them. The brutal mania for leading has sunk many a great ship in the waters of life.